

# American Social Workers Abroad



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
Welfare Administration  
May 1964

# Opportunities Overseas

Social workers from the United States are needed to help developing countries build up their welfare programs and train social welfare personnel. Rapid change is bringing about demand for expanded social services which in turn call for more skilled manpower. The outlook for the next decade is gloomy unless outside aid can be forthcoming.

By taking foreign assignments, American social workers not only help where help is most needed but also gain experience that makes them more valuable members of the staffs of American agencies when they return to the country. Theory, techniques, and programs are improved and perspective is gained through more universal testing and sharing.

## *Types of Foreign Assignments*

Opportunities for American social workers to work or study abroad are usually limited to persons who have had considerable training and experience, since the work generally involves advising a foreign country on the development of its programs. Graduation from a school of social work is a must. Advisory positions are in such fields as social welfare administration, training, family and child welfare, community development. Appointments by agencies like the United Nations or the United States Agency for International Development are usually for a minimum of 2 years.

Under the Fulbright programs, there are some study and lecture opportunities abroad for American social workers. Study and observation assignments require less experience than lectureships and are usually for 1 year. The Peace Corps and a few voluntary agencies are offering volunteer opportunities for social workers, including those just beginning their careers.

## *Welfare Administration Services*

The Welfare Administration, working closely with the professional associations and national agencies, has established the following services to help agencies find qualified staffs and to help social workers find satisfying overseas assignments:

### *Clearinghouse for Overseas Personnel*

A clearinghouse has been established to handle inquiries from social workers seeking overseas opportunities, and to suggest candidates for such opportunities.

Inquiries from social workers are received and answered with current general information about overseas assignments.

Three rosters are maintained:

1. Roster of available candidates.
2. Roster of social workers currently abroad.
3. Roster of those returned, but not immediately available for other overseas assignments.

Candidates will be referred to agencies or organizations, with the expectation that the agency will make its own determination as to qualifications for the job, etc.

Up-to-date information about opportunities for employment or study abroad is maintained at all times.

There is continuing close liaison with "user agencies."

Activities are coordinated with social work and other professional organizations.



## Orientation of Social Workers Going Overseas

In order to increase the effectiveness of the social worker undertaking a new international assignment, the Welfare Administration supplements orientation of the employing or other agency by:

Making available a country file with information and reports of social workers previously in the country.

Briefing on the overall United States social welfare structure, trends, programs.

Arranging conferences with appropriate Government officials, social workers with experience in the country concerned, etc.

## Backstopping Social Workers When Overseas

Insofar as possible, the Welfare Administration will send to American social workers overseas kits of newly published material so that they can keep up-to-date on social welfare developments within the United States.

The Welfare Administration will also meet special requests for material or advice on a specific subject or project.

## Replacement on Return

When a social worker is ready to return from a foreign assignment, he can get information about public welfare positions and suggestions about other points of contact.

If a continuing career abroad is desired, the Welfare Administration can offer help to arrange reassignment in the same or another country.

For further details inquiries may be addressed to:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
Welfare Administration  
International Office  
Washington, D.C., 20201